

## Religious Dates and Festivals 2018-2019

SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 1, 2019

### **Rosh Hashanah (Judaism)**

Rosh Hashanah occurs on the first and second days of [Tishri](#). In Hebrew, Rosh Hashanah means, literally, "head of the year" or "first of the year." Rosh Hashanah is commonly known as the Jewish New Year. This name is somewhat deceptive, because there is little similarity between Rosh Hashanah, one of the holiest days of the year, and the American midnight drinking bash and daytime football game.

There is, however, one important similarity between the Jewish New Year and the American one: Many Americans use the New Year as a time to plan a better life, making "resolutions." Likewise, the Jewish New Year is a time to begin introspection, looking back at the mistakes of the past year and planning the changes to make in the new year.

No [work](#) is permitted on Rosh Hashanah. Much of the day is spent in [synagogue](#), where the regular daily [liturgy](#) is somewhat expanded. In fact, there is a special prayerbook called the machzor used for Rosh Hashanah and [Yom Kippur](#) because of the extensive liturgical changes for these holidays.

The common greeting at this time is L'shanah tovah ("for a good year"). This is a shortening of "L'shanah tovah tikatev v'taihatem" (or to women, "L'shanah tovah tikatevi v'taihatemi"), which means "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year."

OCTOBER 8-9, 2019

### **Yom Kippur (Judaism)**

**Yom Kippur** ([Hebrew](#): יום כּפּוּר, IPA: [jɔm ki'pur]), also known in English as the *Day of Atonement*, is the most solemn and important of the [Jewish holidays](#). Its central themes are [atonement](#) and [repentance](#). Jews traditionally observe this holy day with a 25-hour period of [fasting](#) and intensive [prayer](#), often spending most of the day in [synagogue](#) services.

Yom Kippur is the tenth and final day of the [Ten Days of Repentance](#) which begin with [Rosh Hashanah](#). According to Jewish tradition, God, or "YHVH" ("The One Who Was, Is and Shall Be"), inscribes each person's fate for the coming year into a "book" on Rosh Hashanah and waits until Yom Kippur to "seal" the verdict. During the Ten Days of Repentance, a Jew tries to amend his behavior and seek forgiveness for wrongs done against God (*bein adam leMakom*) and against his fellow man (*bein adam lechavero*). The evening and day of Yom Kippur are set aside for public and private petitions and confessions of guilt ([Vidui](#)). At the end of Yom Kippur, one considers one's self absolved by God.

OCTOBER 13-20, 2019

## Sukkot (Judaism)

The Festival of Sukkot begins on [Tishri](#) 15, the fifth day after [Yom Kippur](#). It is quite a drastic transition, from one of the most solemn holidays in our year to one of the most joyous. Sukkot is so unreservedly joyful that it is commonly referred to in Jewish prayer and literature as Z'man Simchateinu [זמן שמחתנו](#), the Season of our Rejoicing.

Sukkot is the last of the [Shalosh R'galim](#) (three pilgrimage festivals). Like [Passover](#) and [Shavu'ot](#), Sukkot has a dual significance: historical and agricultural. Historically, Sukkot commemorates the forty-year period during which the children of Israel were wandering in the desert, living in temporary shelters. Agriculturally, Sukkot is a harvest festival and is sometimes referred to as Chag Ha-Asif [חג האסיף](#), the Festival of Ingathering.

The word "Sukkot" means "booths," and refers to the temporary dwellings that we are commanded to live in during this holiday in memory of the period of wandering. The Hebrew pronunciation of Sukkot is "Sue COAT," but is often pronounced as in [Yiddish](#), to rhyme with "BOOK us." The name of the holiday is frequently translated "Feast of Tabernacles," which, like many translations of Jewish terms, isn't very useful. This translation is particularly misleading, because the word "tabernacle" in the Bible refers to the portable Sanctuary in the desert, a precursor to the [Temple](#), called in Hebrew "mishkan." The Hebrew word "sukkah" (plural: "sukkot") refers to the temporary booths that people lived in, not to the Tabernacle.

Sukkot lasts for seven days. The two days following the festival, [Shemini Atzeret](#) and [Simchat Torah](#), are separate holidays but are related to Sukkot and are commonly thought of as part of Sukkot.

The festival of Sukkot is instituted in Leviticus 23:33 et seq. No [work](#) is permitted on the first and second days of the holiday. (See [Extra Day of Holidays](#) for an explanation of why the Bible says one day but we observe two). Work is permitted on the remaining days. These intermediate days on which work is permitted are referred to as Chol Ha-Mo'ed, as are the intermediate days of [Passover](#).

OCTOBER 27, 2019

## Diwali (Hinduism)

**Dīvali** (or **Dīpāwali**, often written **Deepavali**) ([Tamil](#): தீபாவளி; [Telugu](#): దీపావళి) is a significant festival in [Hinduism](#), [Sikhism](#), [Buddhism](#), and [Jainism](#), and an official holiday in [India](#).<sup>[1]</sup> Adherents of these religions celebrate Diwali as the *Festival of Lights*. They light diyas—cotton-like string wicks inserted in small clay pots filled with coconut oil—to signify victory of good over the evil within an individual.

The five day festival of Divali occurs on the new moon between October 13 and November 14. On the [Hindu calendar](#) it is centered on the new moon day that ends the month of [Ashwin](#) and begins the month of [Kartika](#), beginning on the 13th day of the dark half of [Ashwin](#) (Ashwin 28th) and ending on the 2nd day of the bright half of [Kartika](#) (Kartika 2nd). The main day of celebration varies regionally.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

NOVEMBER 1, 2019

## All Saints Day (Christianity)

**All Saints' Day** (officially the **Feast of All Saints** and also called **All Hallows** or **Hallowmas**<sup>[1]</sup>), often shortened to **All Saints**, is a feast celebrated on November 1 in [Western Christianity](#), and on the first Sunday after [Pentecost](#) in [Eastern Christianity](#) in honour of all the [saints](#), known and unknown.

In terms of [Western Christian](#) theology, the feast commemorates all those who have attained the [beatific vision](#) in [heaven](#). Specifically, in the [Roman Catholic Church](#), the next day, [All Souls' Day](#), commemorates the departed faithful who have not yet been [purified](#) and reached [heaven](#).

DECEMBER 22-30, 2019

## Hanukkah (Judaism)

**Hanukkah** ([Hebrew](#): חנוכה, pronounced [ˈχanuka], alt. **Chanukah**), also known as the **Festival of Lights**, is an eight-day [Jewish holiday](#) commemorating the rededication of the [Holy Temple](#) in [Jerusalem](#) at the time of the [Maccabean Revolt](#) of the [2nd century BCE](#). Hanukkah is observed for eight nights, starting on the 25th day of [Kislev](#) according to the [Hebrew calendar](#), and may occur from late November to late December on the [Gregorian calendar](#).

The festival is observed by the kindling of the lights of a special [candelabrum](#), the nine-branched [Menorah](#) or *Hanukiah*, one light on each night of the holiday, progressing to eight on the final night. An extra light called a [shamash](#) ([Hebrew](#): "guard" or "servant") is also lit each night for the purpose of lighting the others, and is given a distinct location, usually above or below the rest.

DECEMBER 25, 2019

## Christmas (Christianity)

**Christmas**<sup>[3]</sup> or **Christmas Day**<sup>[4][5]</sup> is a [holiday](#), held on December 25 to commemorate [the birth](#) of [Jesus](#), the central figure of [Christianity](#).<sup>[6][7]</sup> The date is not known to be the actual birth date of Jesus, and may have initially been chosen to correspond with either the day exactly nine months after some early Christians believed [Jesus had been conceived](#),<sup>[8]</sup> the date of the [winter solstice](#) on the ancient Roman calendar,<sup>[9]</sup> or one of

various ancient [winter festivals](#).<sup>[8][10]</sup> Christmas is central to the [Christmas and holiday season](#), and in Christianity marks the beginning of the larger season of [Christmastide](#), which lasts [twelve days](#).<sup>[11]</sup>

Although nominally a [Christian](#) holiday, Christmas is also widely celebrated by many non-Christians,<sup>[1][12]</sup> and many of its popular celebratory customs have [pre-Christian](#) or [secular](#) themes and origins. Popular modern customs of the holiday include gift-giving, [music](#), an exchange of [greeting cards](#), [church](#) celebrations, a special meal, and the display of various decorations; including [Christmas trees](#), [lights](#), [garlands](#), [mistletoe](#), [nativity scenes](#), and [holly](#). In addition, [Father Christmas](#), so named in parts of England and in France ('Pere Noel'), known as [Santa Claus](#) in many other areas, including [Scotland](#), [North America](#), [Australia](#) and [Ireland](#)), is a popular [folklore](#) figure in many countries, associated with the bringing of gifts for children.<sup>[13]</sup>

Because [gift-giving](#) and many other aspects of the Christmas festival involve heightened economic activity among both Christians and non-Christians, the holiday has become a significant event and a key sales period for retailers and businesses. The economic impact of Christmas is a factor that has grown steadily over the past few centuries in many regions of the world.

JANUARY 6, 2020

## Epiphany (Christianity)

**Epiphany** ([Greek](#) for "to manifest" or "to show"), is a Christian [feast day](#) which celebrates the revelation of [God in human form](#) in the person of [Jesus Christ](#). Epiphany falls on January 6. ...Western Christians commemorate the visitation of the [Biblical Magi](#) to the [child Jesus](#) on this day, i.e., his manifestation to the [Gentiles](#). [Eastern Christians](#) commemorate the [baptism of Jesus](#) in the [Jordan River](#), his manifestation to the world as the [Son of God](#). It is also called [Theophany](#), especially by Eastern Christians.

FEBRUARY 26, 2020

## Ash Wednesday (Christianity)

In the [Western Christian calendar](#), **Ash Wednesday** is the first day of [Lent](#) and occurs forty-six days (forty days not counting [Sundays](#)) before [Easter](#). It is a [moveable feast](#), falling on a different date each year because it is dependent on the [date of Easter](#). It can occur as early as 4 February or as late as 10 March.

Ash Wednesday gets its name from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful as a sign of repentance. The ashes used are gathered after the Palm Crosses from the previous year's [Palm Sunday](#) are burned. In the liturgical practice of some churches, the ashes are mixed with the Oil of the [Catechumens](#)<sup>[1]</sup> (one of the [sacred oils](#) used to anoint those about to be [baptized](#)), though some churches use

ordinary oil. This paste is used by the minister who presides at the service to make the [sign of the cross](#), first upon his or her own forehead and then on those of congregants. The minister recites the words: "Remember (O man) that you are dust, and to dust you shall return", or "Repent, and believe the Gospel."

FEBRUARY 27--APRIL 11, 2020

## Lent (Christianity)

**Lent** ([Latin](#): [Quadragesima](#): *Fortieth*) is a solemn religious observance in the [liturgical calendar](#) that begins on [Ash Wednesday](#) and ends approximately six weeks later, before [Easter Sunday](#). The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer through [prayer](#), doing [penance](#), [repentance](#) of sins, [almsgiving](#), [atonement](#), and [self-denial](#). This event is observed by Christians in the [Anglican](#), [Eastern Orthodox](#), [Lutheran](#), [Methodist](#), and [Roman Catholic](#) Churches.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup> Some [Anabaptist](#) and [evangelical](#) churches also observe the Lenten season.<sup>[4][5]</sup> Its institutional purpose is heightened in the annual commemoration of [Holy Week](#), marking the death, burial, and [resurrection of Jesus](#), which recalls the tradition and events of the [New Testament](#) beginning on [Friday of Sorrows](#), further climaxing on Jesus' [crucifixion](#) on [Good Friday](#), which ultimately culminates in the joyful celebration on [Easter Sunday](#) of the [Resurrection of Jesus Christ](#).

In Lent, many Christians commit to [fasting](#) or giving up certain types of [luxuries](#) as a form of penitence. Many Christians also add a Lenten spiritual discipline, such as reading a [daily devotional](#), to draw themselves near to God.<sup>[6]</sup> The [Stations of the Cross](#), a devotional commemoration of [Christ's carrying the Cross](#) and of [his execution](#), are often observed. Many [Roman Catholic](#) and some [Protestant](#) churches remove flowers from their altars, while [crucifixes](#), religious statues, and other elaborate religious symbols are often veiled in violet fabrics in solemn observance of the event. Throughout [Christendom](#), some adherents mark the season with the traditional abstention from the consumption of meat, most notably among Roman Catholics.<sup>[7]</sup>

Lent is traditionally described as lasting for forty days, in commemoration of the [forty days Jesus spent fasting in the desert](#), according to the Gospels of [Matthew](#), [Mark](#) and [Luke](#), before beginning his [public ministry](#), after which he endured temptation by [the Devil](#).<sup>[8][9]</sup>

MARCH 9-10, 2020

## Purim (Judaism)

**Purim** ([Hebrew](#): פורים *Pûrîm* "lots", related to [Akkadian](#) *pûru*) is a [festival](#) that commemorates the deliverance of the [Jewish](#) people of the ancient [Persian Empire](#) from [Haman](#)'s plot to annihilate them, as recorded in the [Biblical Book of Esther](#) (*Megillat Esther*). According to the story, Haman [cast lots](#) to determine the day upon which to exterminate the Jews.

Purim is celebrated annually according to the [Hebrew calendar](#) on the 14th day of the [Hebrew month](#) of [Adar](#) (Adar II in leap years), the day following the victory of the Jews

over their enemies; as with all Jewish holidays, Purim begins at sundown on the previous secular day. In cities that were protected by a surrounding wall at the time of [Joshua](#), including [Shushan](#) (Susa) and [Jerusalem](#), Purim is celebrated on the 15th of the month, known as *Shushan Purim*. Purim is characterized by public recitation of the Book of Esther (*keriat ha-megilla*), giving mutual gifts of food and drink ([mishloach manot](#)), giving charity to the poor (*mattanot la-eyyonim*), and a celebratory meal (*se'udat Purim*);<sup>[1]</sup> other customs include drinking wine, wearing of masks and costumes, and public celebration.

APRIL 8-16, 2020

## Passover (Judaism)

**Passover** ([Hebrew](#), [Yiddish](#): פֶּסַח, [Pesach](#)) is a [Jewish](#) and [Samaritan](#) holy day and festival commemorating the Hebrews escape from enslavement in Egypt.

Passover begins on the 15th day of the month of [Nisan](#) (equivalent to March and April in Gregorian calendar), the first month of the [Hebrew calendar's](#) festival year according to the [Hebrew Bible](#)

In the story of [the Exodus](#), the Bible tells that God inflicted [ten plagues](#) upon the Egyptians before Pharaoh would release his Hebrew slaves, with the tenth plague being the killing of firstborn sons. The Hebrews were instructed to mark the doorposts of their homes with the blood of a spring lamb and, upon seeing this, the spirit of the Lord *passed over* these homes, hence the term "passover".<sup>[2]</sup> When Pharaoh freed the Hebrews, it is said that they left in such a hurry that they could not wait for bread to rise. In commemoration, for the duration of Passover, no [leavened bread](#) is eaten, for which reason it is called "The Festival of the Unleavened Bread".<sup>[3]</sup> [Matza](#) (unleavened bread) is the primary symbol of the holiday. This bread that is flat and unrisen is called Matzo.

APRIL 9, 2020

## Maundy Thursday (Christianity)

Maundy Thursday, also known as "Holy Thursday" is the Thursday of [Passion Week](#), one day before Good Friday (the Thursday before Easter). Maundy Thursday is the name given to the day on which Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples, known as the Last Supper. Two important events are the focus of Maundy Thursday.

First, Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with His disciples and thereby instituted the Lord's Supper, also called Communion ([Luke 22:19-20](#)). Some Christian churches observe a special Communion service on Maundy Thursday in memory of Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples. Second, Jesus washed the disciples' feet as an act of humility and service, thereby setting an example that we should love and serve one another in humility ([John 13:3-17](#)). Some Christian churches observe a foot-washing ceremony on Maundy Thursday to commemorate Jesus' washing the feet of the

disciples.

The word “Maundy” is derived from the Latin word for “command.” The “Maundy” in Maundy Thursday refers to the command Jesus gave to the disciples at the Last Supper, that they should love and serve one another.

APRIL 10, 2020

## Good Friday (Christianity)

**Good Friday**, also called **Holy Friday**, **Black Friday**, or **Great Friday**, is a [holiday](#) observed primarily by adherents to [Christianity](#) commemorating the [crucifixion of Jesus](#) and his death at [Calvary](#). The holiday is observed during [Holy Week](#) as part of the [Paschal Triduum](#) on the [Friday](#) preceding [Easter Sunday](#), and often coincides with the Jewish observance of [Passover](#).

APRIL 12, 2020

## Easter (Christianity)

**Easter** ([Greek](#): Πάσχα, *Pascha*) is the most important annual religious feast in the [Christian liturgical year](#).<sup>[1]</sup> According to Christian scripture, [Jesus](#) was [resurrected](#) from the dead on the third day from his [crucifixion](#). Christians celebrate this resurrection on **Easter Day** or **Easter Sunday**<sup>[2]</sup> (also **Resurrection Day** or **Resurrection Sunday**), two days after [Good Friday](#) and three days after [Maundy Thursday](#). The [chronology](#) of his death and resurrection is variously interpreted to be between [A.D.](#) 26 and 36. Easter also refers to the [season](#) of the church year called [Eastertide](#) or the [Easter Season](#). Traditionally the Easter Season lasted for the forty days from Easter Day until [Ascension](#) Day but now officially lasts for the fifty days until [Pentecost](#). The first week of the Easter Season is known as Easter Week or the [Octave of Easter](#). Easter also marks the end of [Lent](#), a season of fasting, prayer, and penance.

APRIL 23-MAY 23, 2020

## Ramadan (Islam)

**Ramadan** ([Arabic](#): رمضان) (also written *Ramazan*, *Ramzan*, *Ramadhan*, *Ramdan*, *Ramadaan*) is an [Islamic](#) religious observance that takes place during the ninth month of the [Islamic calendar](#); the month in which the [Qur'an](#), according to tradition, was revealed to the [Prophet Muhammad](#). It is the Islamic month of [fasting](#), in which participating Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, and smoking from [sunrise](#) until [sunset](#). Fasting is meant to teach the [Muslim](#) patience, modesty and spirituality. Ramaḍān is a time to fast for the sake of [Allah](#), and to offer more prayer than usual. Muslims also believed through good actions, they get rewarded twice as much as they normally can achieve. During Ramaḍān, Muslims ask forgiveness for past sins, pray for

guidance and help in refraining from everyday evils, and try to purify themselves through self-restraint and good deeds.

MAY 23-24, 2020

## Eid (Islam)

**Eid ul-Fitr** or **Id-ul-Fitr** ([Arabic](#): عيد الفطر *Īdu l-Fitr*), often abbreviated to **Eid**, is a [Muslim holiday](#) that marks the end of [Ramadan](#), the Islamic holy month of [fasting](#). *Eid* is an Arabic word meaning "festivity", while *Fitr* means "to [break the fast](#)" (and can also mean "nature", from the word "fitrah"); and so the holiday symbolizes the breaking of the fasting period. It is celebrated starting on the first day of the Islamic month of [Shawwal](#).

MAY 31, 2020

## Pentecost (Christianity)

**Pentecost** ([Ancient Greek](#): πεντηκοστή [ἡμέρα], pentekostē [hēmera], "the fiftieth day") is one of the prominent feasts in the [Christian liturgical year](#). The feast is also called [Whitsun](#), Whitsunday, Whit Sunday, Whitsuntide, especially in the [United Kingdom](#). Pentecost is celebrated seven weeks (49 days) after [Easter](#) Sunday, hence its name.<sup>[1]</sup> Pentecost falls on the tenth day after [Ascension Thursday](#).

Historically and symbolically related to the Jewish [harvest festival](#) of [Shavuot](#), which commemorates God giving the [Ten Commandments](#) at [Mount Sinai](#) fifty days after the [Exodus](#), Pentecost now also commemorates the descent of the [Holy Spirit](#) upon the [Apostles](#) and other followers of [Jesus](#) as described in the [Book of Acts](#), Chapter 2 in the [New Testament](#). For this reason, Pentecost is sometimes described as "the Church's birthday."

The Jewish calendar marks 5779 years since the events of Genesis 1:1, creation. The Islamic Calendar is about to celebrate 1440 years since the Hijra of Muhammad. The Hindu calendar is currently in year 2076.

Also, the Hindu, Hebrew, and Muslim calendars – being Lunar – mark a shorter year than the Gregorian solar calendar. This is why the holidays slide around each year instead of remaining fixed on our calendar.